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## Snowmobile Safety

Michigan's outdoor fun starts heating up when the air chills and the snow flies. That's when snowmobile enthusiasts take to the trails for sport and adventure. With a network of 6,200 miles of groomed trails and exciting terrain, Michigan has some of the best riding in the Midwest, if not the country! It's no wonder Michigan registers more snowmobiles than any other state in the country and attracts thousands of visitors as well.

Even though last year was the safest snowmobile season in Michigan in more than a decade, 26 people were killed in snowmobile accidents. It was a loss of life both tragic and preventable and many more were injured. Most of the fatalities and serious injuries involved excessive speed or alcohol consumption.

It is illegal in Michigan to operate a snowmobile while under the influence of alcohol. It is also against the law to travel at a rate of speed greater than is reasonable for existing conditions. Knowing the rules and using common sense and trail courtesy help ensure the sport remains safe and enjoyable. Before heading out, keep these safety tips in mind:

- Don't drink. Alcohol impairs judgment and slows reaction time.
- Slow down. Keep your vehicle under control.
- Know the conditions. Be well prepared for any contingency.
- Wear a helmet. State law requires that riders wear a USDOT approved crash helmet.
- Never ride alone. Try and travel in groups.
- Dress appropriately. Carry a first aid kit and safety gear.
- Avoid traveling across frozen bodies of water.
- Use extra caution at night. Don't overdrive your headlights.
- Leave a travel plan. Let someone know your destination and timetable.

Help make Michigan's snow trails fun and safe. For a free *Michigan Snowmobile and Safety Guide* listing more tips, please contact my office toll-free at (866) 305-2136 or by e-mail at <http://senate.mi.gov/stamas>.

Or, visit the DNR website at [www.michigan.gov/dnr](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr) to access full snowmobile rules and regulations, or to locate a snowmobile safety course. I hope you and your family enjoy fun, safety and adventure in Michigan's winter wonderland this year!

Sen. Tony Stamas  
36th Senate District